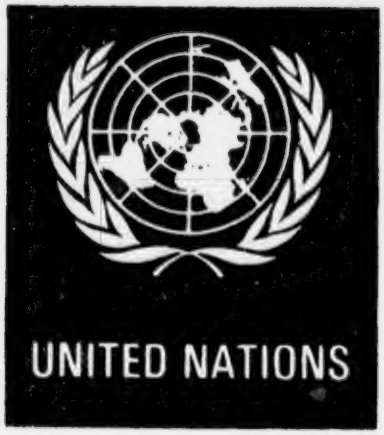

DIVISION FOR PALESTINIAN RIGHTS

April-May 2000

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I. RESOLUTIONS PERTAINING TO THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE AND THE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE ADOPTED BY THE COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS AT ITS FIFTY-SIXTH SESSION

The Commission on Human Rights held its fifty-sixth session in Geneva from 20 March to 28 April 2000. The Commission considered issues relating to the question of Palestine under items 8 and 5 of the agenda, entitled "Question of the violation of human rights in the occupied Arab territories, including Palestine" and "The right of peoples to self-determination and its application to peoples under colonial or alien domination or foreign occupation" respectively.

Under item 8, the Commission had before it a report by the Special Rapporteur, Mr. Giorgio Giacomelli (E/CN.4/2000/25 – see previous Bulletin, Vol. XXIII, No. 1), two reports of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Commission resolutions 1999/5 (E/CN.4/2000/22 and Add.1) and 1999/6 (E/CN.4/2000/23), and a note by the Secretary-General listing United Nations reports issued between sessions of the Commission that deal with the living conditions of the citizens of the Palestinian and other Arab territories under Israeli occupation (E/CN.4/2000/24).

Under item 5, the Commission on Human Rights had before it a report of the Secretary-General on the situation in occupied Palestine prepared pursuant to Commission resolution 1999/55 (E/CN.4/2000/13).

On 7 and 17 April, the Commission adopted four resolutions, the full texts of which are reproduced below:

2000/4. Situation in occupied Palestine

The Commission on Human Rights,

Guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, in particular the provisions of Articles 1 and 55 thereof, which affirm the right of peoples to self-determination, and scrupulous respect of the principle of refraining in international relations from the threat or use of force, as specified in the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States, adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 2625 (XXV) of 24 October 1970,

Guided also by the provisions of article 1 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and article 1 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which affirm that all peoples have the right of self-determination,

Guided further by the provisions of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights in June 1993 (A/CONF.157/23), and in particular Part I, paragraphs 2 and 3, relating to the right of self-determination of all peoples and especially those subject to foreign occupation,

Recalling General Assembly resolutions 181 A and B (II) of 29 November 1947 and 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, as well as all other resolutions which confirm and define the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, particularly their right to self-determination,

Recalling also its previous resolutions in this regard, the latest of which is its resolution 1999/55 of 27 April 1999,

Reaffirming the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination in accordance with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, the relevant United Nations resolutions

and declarations, and the provisions of international covenants and instruments relating to the right to self-determination as an international principle and as a right of all peoples in the world, as it is a jus cogens in international law,

1. Reaffirms the permanent and unqualified Palestinian right to self-determination, including the option of a State, and looks forward to the early fulfilment of this right;

2. Requests the Secretary-General to transmit the present resolution to the Government of Israel and all other Governments, to disseminate it on the widest possible scale and to make available to the Commission on Human Rights, prior to the convening of its fifty-seventh session, all information pertaining to the implementation of the present resolution by the Government of Israel;

3. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-seventh session the item entitled "The right of peoples to self-determination and its application to peoples under colonial or alien domination or foreign occupation" and to consider the situation in occupied Palestine under that agenda item, as a matter of high priority.

Adopted on 7 April 2000
by a vote of 44 to 1,
with 6 abstentions.

2000/6. Question of the violation of human rights in the occupied Arab territories, including Palestine

The Commission on Human Rights,

Guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, as well as by the provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,

Guided also by the provisions of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,

Taking into consideration the provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and the provisions of Additional Protocol I thereto, and the Hague Convention IV of 1907,

Recalling the resolutions of the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights related to the applicability of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and other occupied Arab territories,

Recalling also the General Assembly resolutions on Israeli violations of human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, occupied since 1967,

Recalling further the provisions of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted in June 1993 by the World Conference on Human Rights (A/CONF.157/23),

Taking note of the report (E/CN.4/2000/25) of the Special Rapporteur, Mr. Giorgio Giacomelli, regarding his mission undertaken in accordance with Commission resolution 1993/2 A of 19 February 1993,

Taking note also of the reports of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories submitted to the General Assembly since 1968, including the latest (A/54/325 of 8 September 1999, A/54/73/Add.1 of 7 September 1999 and A/54/73 of 13 April 1999),

Noting with great concern the continued Israeli refusal to abide by the resolutions of the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights calling upon Israel to put an end to the violations of human rights, and affirming the applicability of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of

Civilian Persons in Time of War to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967,

Gravely concerned at the stagnation of the peace process because of the contempt of the Government of Israel for the principles on which that process was based, and its refusal to carry out its commitments in line with the agreements it signed with the Palestine Liberation Organization, on the basis of land for peace, in Washington, Cairo, Hebron, Wye River and Sharm El-Sheikh,

Recalling all its previous resolutions on the subject, including the latest, resolution 1999/5 of 23 April 1999,

1. Condemns the continued violations of human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, in particular the continuation of acts of wounding and killing perpetrated by Israeli soldiers and settlers against Palestinians, in addition to the detention of thousands of Palestinians without trial, the continuation of the confiscation of Palestinian lands, the extension and the establishment of Israeli settlements thereon, the confiscation of Palestinian property and expropriation of their land, the demolition of Palestinian homes and the uprooting of fruit trees, and calls upon Israel to cease immediately these acts, which constitute grave violations of human rights and of the principles of international law and also constitute a major obstacle in the way of the peace process;

2. Also condemns the expropriation of Palestinian homes in Jerusalem, the revocation of identity cards of the citizens of the Palestinian city of Jerusalem, the imposition of fabricated and exorbitant taxes with the aim of forcing the Palestinian citizens of Jerusalem, who cannot afford to pay these high taxes, out of their homes and out of their city, preparing in this way the path for the Judaization of Jerusalem, and calls upon the Government of Israel to put an end immediately to these practices;

3. Further condemns the use of torture against Palestinians during interrogation, as it constitutes a grave breach of the principles of international humanitarian law and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and calls upon the Government of Israel to put an end immediately to the use of such practices;

4. Reaffirms that all the Israeli settlements in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, are illegal, constitute a flagrant violation of the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 and of the principles of international law, and should be dismantled in order to achieve a just, permanent and comprehensive peace in the region of the Middle East;

5. Also reaffirms that the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War is applicable to the Palestinian territory and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including East Jerusalem, and considers any change in the geographical and demographic status of the city of East Jerusalem from its situation prior to the June 1967 war to be illegal and void;

6. Calls upon Israel to cease immediately its policy of enforcing collective punishments, such as demolition of houses and closure of the Palestinian territory, measures which constitute flagrant violations of international law and international humanitarian law, endanger the lives of Palestinians and also constitute a major obstacle in the way of peace;

7. Calls once more upon Israel, the occupying Power, to desist from all forms of violation of human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and other occupied Arab territories, and to respect the bases of international law, the principles of international humanitarian law, its international commitments and the agreements it signed with the Palestine Liberation Organization in relation to the peace process;

8. Also calls upon Israel to withdraw from the Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, and the other Arab territories occupied since 1967, in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the United Nations and the Commission on Human Rights, as a basic condition for achieving a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East;

9. Requests the Secretary-General to bring the present resolution to the attention of the Government of Israel and all other Governments, the competent United Nations organs, the specialized agencies, regional intergovernmental organizations and international humanitarian organizations, to disseminate it on the widest possible scale and to report on its implementation by the Government of Israel to the Commission on Human Rights at its fifty-seventh session;

10. Also requests the Secretary-General to provide the Commission on Human Rights with all United Nations reports issued between sessions of the Commission that deal with the conditions in which the citizens of the Palestinian and other occupied Arab territories are living under the Israeli occupation;

11. Decides to consider this question at its fifty-seventh session under the same agenda item, as a matter of high priority.

Adopted on 17 April 2000
by a vote of 31 to 1,
with 19 abstentions.

2000/7. Human rights in the occupied Syrian Golan

The Commission on Human Rights,

Deeply concerned at the suffering of the Syrian citizens in the occupied Syrian Golan due to the violation of their fundamental and human rights since the Israeli military occupation of 1967,

Recalling Security Council resolution 497 (1981) of 17 December 1981,

Recalling also all relevant General Assembly resolutions, including the latest, resolution 54/80 of 6 December 1999, in which the Assembly, inter alia, called upon Israel to comply with Security Council resolution 497 (1981), to put an end to its practices violating the rights of the Syrian citizens in the occupied Syrian Golan and to put an end to its occupation of the occupied Syrian Golan,

Reaffirming once more the illegality of Israel's decision of 14 December 1981 to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration on the occupied Syrian Golan, which has resulted in the effective annexation of that territory,

Reaffirming the principle of non-acquisition of territory by force in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law,

Taking note with deep concern of the report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories (A/54/325) and, in this connection, deploring the Israeli settlement in the occupied Arab territories and regretting Israel's constant refusal to cooperate with and to receive the Special Committee,

Guided by the relevant provisions of the Charter of the United Nations , international law and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and reaffirming the applicability of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and the relevant provisions of the Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907 to the occupied Syrian Golan,

Reaffirming the importance of the peace process which started in Madrid on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967, 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973 and 425 (1978) of 19 March 1978 and the

principle of land for peace, which aims at the establishment of a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East,

Expressing its concern about the stoppage of the peace process on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks, and hoping that the commitments and guarantees reached during the previous talks will be respected in order that the talks may resume as soon as possible on both tracks,

Reaffirming its previous relevant resolutions, the most recent being resolution 1999/6 of 23 April 1999,

1. Calls upon Israel, the occupying Power, to comply with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and of the Security Council, particularly resolution 497 (1981), in which the Council, inter alia, decided that the Israeli decision to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration on the occupied Syrian Golan is null and void and without international legal effect, and demanded that Israel should rescind forthwith its decision;

2. Also calls upon Israel to desist from changing the physical character, demographic composition, institutional structure and legal status of the occupied Syrian Golan, and emphasizes that the displaced persons of the population of the occupied Syrian Golan must be allowed to return to their homes and to recover their properties;

3. Further calls upon Israel to desist from imposing Israeli citizenship and Israeli identity cards on the Syrian citizens in the occupied Syrian Golan and to desist from its repressive measures against them, and from all other practices mentioned in the report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories;

4. Determines that all legislative and administrative measures and actions taken or to be taken by Israel, the occupying Power, that purport to alter the character and legal status of the occupied Syrian Golan are null and void, constitute a flagrant violation of international law and of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War and have no legal effect;

5. Calls once again upon Member States not to recognize any of the legislative or administrative measures and actions referred to above;

6. Requests the Secretary-General to bring the present resolution to the attention of all Governments, the competent United Nations organs, the specialized agencies, regional intergovernmental organizations and international humanitarian organizations and to give it the widest possible publicity, and to report to the Commission on Human Rights at its fifty-seventh session;

7. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-seventh session, as a matter of high priority, the item entitled "Question of the violation of human rights in the occupied Arab territories, including Palestine".

Adopted on 17 April 2000
by a vote of 31 to 1,
with 19 abstentions.

2000/8. Israeli settlements in the occupied Arab territories

The Commission on Human Rights,

Reaffirming that all Member States have an obligation to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms as stated in the Charter of the United Nations and as elaborated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenants on Human Rights and other applicable instruments,

Mindful that Israel is a party to the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, which is applicable to Palestinian and all Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including East Jerusalem,

Recalling its previous resolutions, most recently resolution 1999/7 of 23 April 1999, in which, inter alia, it reaffirmed the illegality of the Israeli settlements in the occupied territories,

1. Welcomes:

(a) The Sharm el-Sheikh Memorandum of 4 September 1999, while noting with concern the delays in its implementation, and calls for the full implementation of the Memorandum, as well as of the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip of 28 September 1995 and other related agreements;

(b) The report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 (E/CN.4/2000/25) and hopes that the Government of Israel will cooperate with the Special Rapporteur to allow him fully to discharge his mandate;

2. Expresses its grave concern:

(a) At the continuing Israeli settlement activities, in spite of the Government's moratorium on new construction permits, including the expansion of the settlements, the installation of settlers in the occupied territories, the expropriation of land, the demolition of houses, the confiscation of property, the expulsion of local residents and the construction of bypass roads, which change the physical character and demographic composition of the occupied territories, including East Jerusalem, since all these actions are illegal, constitute a violation of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War and are a major obstacle to peace;

(b) At and strongly condemns all acts of terrorism, whilst calling upon all parties not to allow any acts of terrorism to affect the ongoing peace process negatively;

3. Urges the Government of Israel:

(a) To comply fully with the previous Commission resolutions on the subject, most recently resolution 1999/7 of 23 April 1999;

(b) To match its stated commitment to the peace process with concrete actions to fulfil its obligations and cease completely its policy of expanding the settlements and related activities in the occupied territories, including East Jerusalem;

(c) To forgo and prevent any new installation of settlers in the occupied territories;

4. Decides to continue its consideration of this question at its fifty-seventh session.

Adopted on 17 April 2000
by a vote of 50 to 1,
with 1 abstention.

II. INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON PALESTINE REFUGEES AND UNITED NATIONS NGO MEETING ON PALESTINE REFUGEES HELD AT UNESCO HEADQUARTERS, PARIS, FROM 26 TO 28 APRIL 2000

International Conference on Palestine Refugees

The International Conference on Palestine Refugees was organized by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People in cooperation with the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the League of Arab States. The Conference was held at the headquarters of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in Paris on 26 and 27 April 2000.

The purpose of the Conference was to provide information on the current situation of the Palestine refugees, examine the role of the United Nations in finding a just solution to the refugee issue, provide an in-depth analysis of the Palestine refugee issue in the context of the current Middle East peace process, and promote concerted political and other action in support of a lasting solution of the Palestine refugee problem in accordance with international legitimacy, as a prerequisite for a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

The Conference was attended by representatives of 58 Governments, Palestine, 3 intergovernmental organizations, 4 United Nations bodies and agencies, and 38 non-governmental organizations. It was also attended by delegations of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, headed by Bruno Eduardo Rodriguez Parrilla, Vice-Chairman of the Committee; the Organization of the Islamic Conference, headed by Azzedine Laraki, Secretary-General; and the League of Arab States, headed by Said Kamal, Under-Secretary-General. Presentations were made by 16 experts, including Palestinians and Israelis. Each plenary session included a discussion period open to all participants.

The opening session of the Conference was attended by His Excellency Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization and President of the Palestinian Authority. The Secretary-General of the United Nations was represented by Mr. Kieran Prendergast, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, who read out a statement on behalf of the Secretary-General. Statements were made by Mr. Bruno Rodriguez Parrilla, Vice-Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, and Dr. Azeddine Laraki, Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference. A statement on behalf of the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States was delivered by his representative, Mr. Said Kamal, Under-Secretary-General for Palestine Affairs; and a statement on behalf of the Director-General of UNESCO was delivered by his representative, Mr. Ahmed Sayyad, Assistant Director-General. Mr. As'ad Abdul Rahman, Member of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization and Head of the Refugees Department, also made a statement. Moreover, statements were made by representatives of the following Governments: Oman of behalf of the Arab Group, South Africa on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, France, Indonesia, China, Ukraine, Italy and Egypt.

Three plenary sessions were conducted, with the participation of the following speakers:

I. *Palestine refugees - the longest-running humanitarian problem in today's world: Mr. Salman Abu-Sitta, researcher and former member of the Palestine National Council, Kuwait; Mr. Don Peretz, Professor Emeritus, Binghamton University, New York; Mr. Uri Avnery, journalist, writer, peace activist and Chairperson of Gush Shalom, Tel Aviv; and Ms. Susan Akram, Associate Professor, Boston University School of Law, Boston.*

II. *The United Nations and Palestine refugees*: *Dr. Hussein Hassouna, Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the United Nations, New York; Mr. Lionel Brisson, Director of Operations, representative of the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA); Mr. Mustapha Djemali, Director of the Regional Bureau for Central Asia, South-West Asia, North Africa and the Middle East, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Geneva; Ms. Laura Reanda, former United Nations official, consultant, New York; Mr. Yossi Katz, Member of Knesset (Labour), Tel Aviv; and Mr. Terry Rempel, Coordinator of research, BADIL Resource Centre for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights, Jerusalem.*

III. *Palestine refugees and the current Middle East peace process*: *Mr. Osama El-Baz, Political Adviser to the President of the Arab Republic of Egypt ; Mr. Henry Siegman, Director, United States/Middle East Project, Council on Foreign Relations, New York; Mrs. Karin Roxman, Political Adviser to the Special Envoy of the European Union to the Middle East Peace Process, Brussels; Mr. Andrew Robinson, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Ottawa; Mr. Alexandre Zassypkin, Head of the Middle East Peace Process Desk, Middle East and North Africa Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Moscow; and Mr. As'ad Abdul Rahman, Member of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, Head of the Refugees Department, Ramallah.*

The main points of the deliberations were summarized in the Concluding Remarks of the Organizers, as follows:

Concluding Remarks of the Organizers

1. The International Conference on Palestine Refugees, held on 26 and 27 April 2000 at UNESCO headquarters, Paris, was convened by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the League of Arab States to discuss the current situation of Palestine refugees, examine the role of the United Nations in finding a just solution to the refugee issue, analyse the question of Palestine refugees in the context of the current Middle East peace process, and promote concerted political and other action in support of a lasting solution of the Palestine refugee problem in accordance with international legitimacy, as a prerequisite for a comprehensive, just and lasting peace and stability in the Middle East.

2. The Organizers recalled that the question of Palestine refugees - today's longest-running humanitarian problem - remained unresolved. They noted that, on the threshold of the new millennium, some 3.7 million Palestine refugees, registered with UNRWA and scattered throughout the Middle East and beyond, continued to live in camps, many away from their homeland, denied their right of return and self-determination, with bleak economic prospects, their freedom of movement restricted, families separated, their hopes and aspirations for the future dependent on the outside world. The Organizers stressed that the social and economic conditions of the refugees remained difficult and required urgent intervention on the part of the international community.

3. The Conference was held against the background of the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian negotiations on permanent status issues. The Organizers welcomed progress made in recent months by the two sides and called upon the parties to move the peace process forward towards the conclusion of the framework and final settlement agreements. They noted that the plight of Palestine refugees was among the permanent status issues being negotiated by the parties. It was emphasized, in this context, that a just solution to the question of Palestine and a lasting peace in the Middle East could not be achieved without a just and fair solution to the question of Palestine refugees.

4. The Organizers recalled the significance of the multilateral process, launched in 1991 by the Madrid Peace Conference. The multilateral

track of negotiations remained an essential part of the peace process. The Refugee Working Group, chaired by Canada since 1992, continued to play a useful supporting role.

5. The deliberations of the Conference demonstrated the strong support of the international community for efforts aimed at finding a solution to the question of Palestine refugees and displaced persons based on key United Nations resolutions, notably General Assembly resolutions 212 (III) of 19 November 1948; 194 (III) of 11 December 1948; 302 (IV) of 8 December 1949; and Security Council resolutions 237 (1967) and 242 (1967). In that connection, the Organizers emphasized the permanent responsibility of the United Nations towards all aspects of the question of Palestine, including the problem of Palestine refugees, until it is resolved in conformity with relevant United Nations resolutions and in accordance with international legitimacy.

6. The Organizers reaffirmed that the right of return of Palestine refugees to their homes, as stipulated by General Assembly in its resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, remained a *conditio sine qua non* for the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty. They also stated that the provisions of General Assembly resolution 194 (III) and subsequent relevant United Nations resolutions remained valid and must be taken into full consideration in any final settlement of the question of Palestine. The Organizers were of the view that the United Nations should continue to protect the natural and inalienable right of Palestinians to return to their homes and should act as its guarantor, pending a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine.

7. The Organizers reaffirmed the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to return to their land and property, abandoned as a result of the 1948 and 1967 hostilities. They considered the issue of refugee compensation to be an integral element of, but not a substitute for, their right of return. The Organizers also took note of the views expressed by the participants with respect to the importance of addressing the problem of compensation for the losses sustained by the refugees since 1948 in an adequate and just manner. In that regard, reference was made to the various compensation schemes that had been put forward over the years. The possibility of engaging international organizations, including the United Nations, on the issue of compensation had also been raised.

8. The Organizers expressed their gratitude for the invaluable assistance provided over decades by the United Nations system to Palestine refugees. They noted, in particular, the critical role played for over 50 years by UNRWA in assisting the refugees through the provision of humanitarian relief and social services. They called upon all Governments, including non-contributing Governments, to contribute to UNRWA's budget regularly in order to meet the anticipated needs of the Agency and intensify support for its activities. The Organizers were of the view that, pending a final settlement, any reduction in the level of financing of UNRWA would inevitably lead to further exacerbation of the living conditions of the refugees. The international community should continue to support the vital activities of UNRWA until the question of Palestine refugees was resolved in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions and international legitimacy.

9. The Organizers were also grateful to countries which, for decades, had hosted Palestine refugees and displaced persons - the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic, the Arab Republic of Egypt and other countries. For decades, they had been providing the much-needed humanitarian assistance and services to millions of refugees and had closely cooperated with UNRWA. It was noted that the provision of assistance by host countries to Palestine refugees for such a protracted period had put additional pressure on their economies. A view was expressed that the idea of absorption of Palestine refugees and displaced persons by host countries was not acceptable from the political, legal or socio-economic standpoints. It was also stressed that efforts at finding a solution to the problem

of Palestine refugees should not ignore its political dimension.

10. The Organizers noted with appreciation the role played by the co-sponsors of the peace process, the European Union and the international donor community in creating conditions on the ground conducive to the success of the peace process. The political support and vast economic assistance provided by members of the European Union and the international donor community to the Palestinian people were key to rehabilitating the Palestinian economy. This was a welcome and tangible contribution to facilitating the transition of Palestinian society to economic independence and statehood.

11. The Organizers welcomed the participation in the Conference of H.E. Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization and President of the Palestinian Authority. They expressed deep appreciation for his untiring efforts and wise leadership in the quest for a peaceful solution of the question of Palestine and a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East in accordance with international legitimacy.

12. The Organizers expressed gratitude to Mr. Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations, for his support for the rights of the Palestinian people and for his continuing personal efforts in the search for peace and stability in the Middle East. They stressed the need for further strengthening of cooperation among the United Nations, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the League of Arab States towards the goal of achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine.

13. The Organizers expressed appreciation and gratitude to His Excellency Mr. Koichiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO, for extending assistance in the preparations for the Conference, as well as for making available the conference facilities for this occasion.

UNESCO headquarters, Paris, 27 April 2000

United Nations NGO Meeting on Palestine Refugees

The United Nations NGO Meeting on Palestine Refugees was convened pursuant to General Assembly resolutions A/54/39 and A/54/40 of 1 December 1999, under the auspices of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, at the headquarters of the United Nations Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (UNESCO) in Paris, on 28 April 2000, immediately following the two-day International Conference on Palestine Refugees.

The Meeting was attended by representatives of 65 non-governmental organizations (NGOs), 10 Governments, a delegation of Palestine, three intergovernmental organizations, two United Nations bodies and agencies.

The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was represented by a delegation composed of Mr. Bruno Eduardo Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba), Vice-Chairman of the Committee and head of the delegation; Mr. Ravan A.G. Farhâdi (Afghanistan), Vice-Chairman; Mr. Walter Balzan (Malta), Rapporteur; Mr. Sotirios Zackheos (Cyprus); and Mr. Nasser Al-Kidwa (Palestine).

The NGO Meeting was opened by Mr. Bruno Eduardo Rodríguez Parrilla, Vice-Chairman of the Committee and head of the delegation. The plenary session was chaired by Mr. Don Betz, Chairman of the International Coordinating Committee on the Question of Palestine. Presentations were made by Mr. As'ad Abdul Rahman, Member of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization and

Head of the Refugees Department; and by Ms. Joyce Ajlouny, Programme Representative, Oxfam United Kingdom.

The plenary was followed by a workshop focusing on such themes as the experience of NGOs in delivering basic social services to refugee communities, promoting awareness of Palestine refugee rights internationally, promoting stronger support for UNRWA, and the role of NGOs in empowering the refugee communities.

The NGO Meeting was closed by Mr. Ravan A.G. Farhâdi, Vice-Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

The participating NGOs adopted the following Statement:

NGO Statement

1. We NGOs thank the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for convening this Meeting at UNESCO headquarters in Paris on the "role of NGOs in the promotion of a just settlement of the Palestine refugee problem".

2. We NGOs recall that the question of Palestine refugees - today's longest-running humanitarian problem - remains unresolved. We note that, on the threshold of the new millennium, more than 3.6 million Palestine refugees, registered with UNRWA, scattered around the Middle East and beyond, continue to live in camps and elsewhere, many away from their homeland, denied their right of return and self-determination, with bleak economic prospects, their freedom of movement restricted, families separated, their hopes and aspirations for the future dependent on the outside world. We stress that the social and economic conditions of the refugees remain very difficult and require urgent intervention on the part of the international community.

3. We NGOs note that the plight of Palestine refugees is among the permanent status issues being negotiated by the parties. It is emphasized, in this context, that a just solution to the question of Palestine and a lasting peace in the Middle East cannot be achieved without a just and fair solution to the question of Palestine refugees.

4. Further, we NGOs affirm that the right of return of Palestine refugees to their homes, as stipulated by General Assembly in its resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, remains a *conditio sine qua non* for the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty. This historically relevant resolution, which has been reaffirmed every year by its adoption by the United Nations General Assembly, confirms the right of the refugees themselves to a choice of return and restitution of property, and just compensation for those wishing or not wishing to return.

5. We declare that the provisions of General Assembly resolution 194 (III) and subsequent relevant United Nations resolutions remain valid and must be taken into full consideration in any final settlement of the question of Palestine. We call upon the United Nations to continue to protect the natural and inalienable right of Palestinians to return to their homes and act as its guarantor, pending a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine.

6. We NGOs reaffirm the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to return to their land and property, abandoned as a result of the 1948 and 1967 hostilities. We consider the issue of refugee compensation to be an integral element of, but not a substitute for, their right of return. We recognize the importance of addressing the problem of compensation for the losses sustained by the refugees since 1948 in an adequate and just manner.

7. We NGOs note the assistance provided over decades to Palestine refugees by the United Nations system. We have focused, in particular, on the critical role played for over 50 years by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in assisting the refugees through the provision of humanitarian relief and social services. We call upon all Governments, including non-contributing Governments, to contribute to the UNRWA budget regularly and to consider increasing their contributions in order to meet the anticipated needs of the Agency and intensify support for its activities. We NGOs believe that, pending a final settlement, any reduction in the level of financing of UNRWA would inevitably lead to further exacerbation of the living conditions of the refugees. The international community should continue to support the vital activities of UNRWA until the question of the Palestine refugees is resolved in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions and international legitimacy.

8. We especially want to focus NGO international attention on the plight of Palestine refugees living in Lebanon. We firmly reject any attempt to use their fate for issues not related to the Palestine refugee problem. Their circumstances require immediate and sustained attention by the international community, international organizations, Governments and NGOs alike. We NGOs also declare that the idea of absorption or expulsion of Palestine refugees and displaced persons by host countries is not acceptable from the political, legal, socio-economic or moral standpoints.

9. We NGOs believe that the State of Israel bears moral and political responsibility for creating the Palestine refugee problem. The clearest demonstration Israel can offer that it accepts its responsibility for dispossessing Palestinian people of their homes and lands would be that it publicly acknowledges the inalienable right of return of Palestine refugees. More than any other State in the world today, Israel should understand what this demand means to a humiliated and suffering people, as the Palestinians have been since partition.

10. We appreciate the work of the Palestinian associations and NGOs to reaffirm that negotiations on the Palestine refugee question can take place only with the active involvement of the refugees themselves. We declare our complete support of the Joint Statement of November 1999 by Organizations and NGOs of Internally Displaced Palestinians and Palestinian Refugees in Palestine and Lebanon, and for the political statement on the final status negotiations issued by the Union of Youth Activity Centres/West Bank and Gaza Refugee Camps on 18 May 1999.

11. As NGOs we call for the Palestinian refugees to be brought back into the protection framework offered to all other refugees in the world, namely, separate, additional representation, full protection and enforcement.

12. We strongly emphasize that during this period, all of the Palestinian refugees are entitled to the rights of protection recognized for all refugees, especially those defined by the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees ("Refugee Convention"), which the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is empowered to uphold and enforce. The Palestinian refugees also have the right to the social, medical and educational support of UNRWA.

13. We NGOs pledge to utilize our expertise and experience in communication, education, advocacy and assistance in locally and internationally coordinated efforts on behalf of Palestine refugees. Areas of serious concern that require immediate governmental and non-governmental attention include: increased commitment to UNRWA services; the need to ensure both quantity and quality of service coverage; development and empowerment of refugee community structures, especially relating to women; increased capacity of refugee communities to address their own socio-economic needs; full refugee participation in development aid programmes; ensuring that the refugee service provision is fully protected in the case of future handover of UNRWA services, following the achievement of a just and durable

solution; engaging international NGOs in a process of re-examining legal principles underlying the refugee arguments and searching for feasible modalities that allow Palestine refugees to exercise their right of return and compensation; ensuring that Palestine refugees are not excluded from the internationally accepted frameworks that have guided solutions to other refugee populations; promoting refugee representation in political processes regarding their future; and ensuring that the refugees do not pay the price of the international community's failure to implement its own proposed solutions to the refugee problem.

14. As to a plan of action to address these concerns in support of the Palestine refugees, we propose the establishment of national committees for the recognition of the right of return in each State represented by NGOs here today, with international coordination to network national information among each of the States. These committees would have to work in close cooperation with the Palestinian associations and NGOs in order to prepare and share the documented arguments on the right of return, and to define the role of NGOs in their work on this issue with Governments, political parties, trade unions and others. Special emphasis should be given to the development and enhancement of Palestinian-Israeli NGO collaboration on all issues impacting Palestine refugees. The Israeli peace movement can play an important role in convincing Israeli public opinion and the Israeli Government that the just solution of the refugee problem in no way endangers the State of Israel, but rather will help Israel to achieve peace and reconciliation with its Arab neighbours.

15. Further, we propose that an international NGO committee should assist in networking among the national campaigns and dispatch information and results among the various national committees, relevant international organizations and the media.

16. In this way the NGOs active on the question of Palestine, in close cooperation with the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, can mobilize their members and their individual networks, in pursuit of this initiative on behalf of Palestine refugees which we consider vital to any lasting, humane outcome to the current processes.

17. Fundamentally, we NGOs view the right of return as a matter of the restoration of Palestinian identity, dignity and legitimacy as well as a matter of the proper interpretation and application of international law. We ask the international community to work towards the speedy implementation of General Assembly resolution 194 (III).

III. UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL MEETING IN SUPPORT OF A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT OF THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST HELD IN ATHENS ON 23 AND 24 MAY 2000

The United Nations International Meeting in Support of a Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Establishment of Peace in the Middle East was held in Athens, on 23 and 24 May 2000, under the auspices of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolutions 54/39 and 54/40 of 1 December 1999.

The Committee was represented by a delegation comprising Mr. Ibra Deguène Ka (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee, who acted as Chairman of the Meeting; Mr. Ravan A.G. Farhâdi (Afghanistan), Vice-Chairman of the Committee, who acted also as Vice-Chairman of the Meeting; Mr. Walter Balzan (Malta), Rapporteur of the Committee, who acted as Vice-Chairman and Rapporteur of the Meeting; Mr. André Erdös (Hungary) and Mr. Nasser Al-Kidwa (Palestine).

The International Meeting was attended by representatives of 43 Governments, Palestine, 3 intergovernmental organizations, 2 United Nations programmes and agencies and 35 civil society organizations, as well as special guests of the host country and representatives of the media, universities and academic institutes. Presentations were made by 15 experts from different regions, including Palestinians and Israelis. Each plenary meeting included a discussion period open to all participants.

The opening session was addressed by His Excellency Mr. George Papandreou, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Greece. A message from the Secretary-General of the United Nations was read out by his representative, Mr. Peter Hansen, Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). Statements were made by Mr. Ibra Deguène Ka, Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People; and Mr. Emil Jarjoui, Member of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization and representative of Palestine. The representative of South Africa delivered a statement on behalf of President Thabo Mbeki, who was also Chairman of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. Moreover, a statement was made by the representative of Indonesia.

Three plenary sessions were conducted, with the participation of the following speakers:

I. Final status negotiations and Palestinian statehood: Mr. Salah Bassiouny, Ambassador, Chairman of the Cairo Peace Society and Member of the International Alliance for Arab-Israeli Peace, Cairo; Ms. Ayelet Ophir, Board Member of B'Tselem and founder of the Movement against Administrative Detention, Tel Aviv; Mr. Geoffrey Aronson, Editor of the Report on Israeli Settlement in the Occupied Territories, Foundation for Middle East Peace, Washington, D.C.; and Mr. Sotiris Roussos, Coordinator of the Centre for Mediterranean and Middle East Studies, Athens.

II. International support for a just and peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine and the establishment of a lasting peace in the Middle East: Mr. Markus Kaim, Assistant Professor of Political Science at Friedrich-Schiller University, Jena, Germany; Mr. Alexandre Zassypkin, Chief of the Middle East Peace Process Desk at the Middle East and North Africa Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Moscow; Mr. Jannis Sakellariou, Member of the European Parliament, Brussels; Mr. Abdulaziz Abougosh, Assistant Secretary-General and Director of Coordination with Palestine, Organization of the Islamic Conference, Jeddah; and Mr. Nasser Al-Kidwa, Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations.

III Civil society in support of the peace process: Ms. Samia Khoury, President of Rawdat El-Zuhur Women's Organization, Jerusalem; Mr. Michael Hindley, Political Consultant and former Member of the European Parliament, Lancashire; Ms. Soyata Maïga, Lawyer and Vice-Chairman of the Bar Association of Mali, Bamako; Mr. Jeroen Gunning, Researcher at the Centre for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, University of Durham, United Kingdom; Ms. Zelmys María Domínguez Cortina, Board Member, Organization of Solidarity of the Peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America (OSPAAAL), and Researcher, Centre for African and Middle Eastern Studies (CEAMO), Havana; Ms. Na'ama Carmi, Council Member of Meretz, Tel Aviv; and Mr. Nikolas Voulelis, Managing Director of the Athens News Agency, Athens.

Closing statements were made by Ms. Angeliki Laiou, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Greece; Mr. Emil Jarjoui, Member of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and representative of Palestine; and Mr. Ibra Deguène Ka, Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. The Rapporteur of the Committee and Rapporteur of the International Meeting, Mr. Walter Balzan, introduced the Final Statement of the Meeting, the text of which follows:

Final Statement

1. The United Nations International Meeting in Support of a Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Establishment of Peace in the Middle East was held in Athens, on 23 and 24 May 2000, under the auspices of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. Participants in the Meeting included international experts, eminent political personalities from Greece, representatives of Governments, inter-governmental organizations, United Nations system entities, the Palestinian Authority, civil society organizations and representatives of the media.

2. The Meeting was convened by the Committee with the aim of promoting intensified political and other action by Governments, intergovernmental and civil society organizations for the attainment by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights and in support of the Middle East peace process. The Committee expressed the view that it was important to promote international support for the success of the peace efforts and that, at the current crucial juncture, the international community should spare no effort in pursuit of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine, and in the quest for peace and stability in the entire region of the Middle East.

3. The Meeting was held against the background of Israeli-Palestinian negotiations on interim and permanent status issues The participants emphasized that the agreement on permanent status issues - Palestine refugees, the status of Jerusalem, settlements, borders, sharing of water resources - should be based on the norms of international law and international legitimacy. It was noted that the current phase in the negotiations was crucial and constituted a turning point for the peace process. The participants expressed concern that yet another target date for the conclusion of a framework agreement had been missed. In the light of this, the parties were urged to do everything in their power to preserve and solidify the accomplishments of the peace process and to make an effort to achieve a final settlement agreement by September 2000. The participants had also stressed the urgency of reaching an agreement on interim issues, namely, the third Israeli redeployment from the West Bank, the release of Palestinian prisoners, the opening of the northern safe passage between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, the operation of the Gaza seaport, and economic issues.

4. As the peace process continued to experience difficulties and the situation on the ground remained volatile, meaningful progress was needed in the negotiations on both interim and permanent status issues. In that regard, it was emphasized that the permanent status negotiations had been adversely affected by the lack of real headway on interim issues. This situation required immediate attention of the co-sponsors and of the international community.

5. The participants were also of the view that, for the peace process to succeed, the parties should strive to create, in the negotiations, an atmosphere of genuine commitment to the guiding principles of the peace process, as laid down in the bilateral agreements signed to date. The participants noted in particular that, in recent months, the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations had been offset on a number of occasions by Israeli actions on the ground and Israeli Government statements which were incompatible with the spirit and the letter of the peace process.

6. The participants reviewed the various aspects of the permanent status negotiations and the question of Palestinian statehood. In that context, they reaffirmed that the Middle East peace process was based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the principle of land for peace. The participants stated that the impending declaration of Palestinian statehood was a natural and inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, independence and sovereignty. The international community was

once again called upon to support this right of the Palestinian people and to spare no effort for making it a reality.

7. The participants discussed the role played in the peace process by the co-sponsors, the United Nations system, Europe, the international donor community and intergovernmental and regional organizations, and stressed that the role of all those institutions in supporting the Middle East peace process remained crucial.

8. The participants reiterated the permanent responsibility of the United Nations with respect to all aspects of the question of Palestine, until a satisfactory settlement based on relevant United Nations resolutions and international legitimacy was reached and the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people were fully realized.

9. The participants noted the important role played by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in rendering varied humanitarian assistance to Palestine refugees for over 50 years. In that connection, they strongly urged the international donor community to continue to support the vital activities of the Agency and contribute generously to its budget in order to allow UNRWA to maintain the level of services provided to Palestine refugees.

10. The participants appreciated the contribution by the members of the European Union (EU) to the peace process. The EU's political support and large volume of economic assistance were viewed as vital to the efforts aimed at rehabilitating and developing the Palestinian economy.

11. The international donor community, for its part, remained an important supporting factor in laying the foundations for the viability and sustainability of the Palestinian economy and society. It was reaffirmed that the donor community's assistance was of great importance to the Palestinian people, particularly during the difficult transitional phase. The role played by international donors would become even more critical in the period following the establishment of a Palestinian State.

12. The participants acknowledged the important role played by civil society in the process of transition to Palestinian statehood, as well as in building and developing Palestinian institutions. They also noted that non-governmental and other civil society organizations were making a determined effort to help the parties overcome decades of animosity and suspicion in order to build bridges of trust, understanding and partnership.

13. The participants expressed gratitude to Mr. Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations, for the message addressed to the Meeting, for his consistent support of the rights of the Palestinian people and his unrelenting personal efforts in the search for peace and stability in the Middle East.

14. The participants also welcomed the statement made on behalf of H.E. Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization and President of the Palestinian Authority, and expressed appreciation for his strong commitment to a peaceful solution of the question of Palestine.

15. The Chairman of the Committee, H.E. Mr. Ibra Deguène Ka, and the delegation of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People had the honour of being received by H.E. Mr. George Papandreou, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Greece, who stressed the importance of supporting the Middle East peace process and the rights of the Palestinian people.

16. The participants expressed gratitude to H.E. Mr. George Papandreou, Minister for Foreign Affairs, and to the Government of Greece for hosting the Meeting and for the assistance and support extended to the United Nations Secretariat in its preparation.

Athens, 24 May 2000

IV. STATEMENT ON THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS ISSUED ON 22 MAY 2000 BY THE PRESIDENCY OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

A statement on the Middle East peace process was issued on 22 May 2000 by the Presidency of the European Union on behalf of the European Union (A/54/883-S/2000/488):

The European Union considers that a real opportunity exists to attain a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East, based on the basic principles established within the framework of Madrid. The European Union remains ready to work with the parties to this end.

The European Union deplores the recent escalation of tension and violence that has taken place in the Occupied Territories. The European Union urges all parties concerned to exercise restraint and appeals to Israel and the Palestinian Authority to intensify their efforts with a view to urgently concluding the framework agreement foreseen in the Sharm-el-Sheikh Memorandum of September 1999 and the permanent status negotiations within the agreed time frame and with the courage and spirit of compromise that they demand. The European Union welcomes the Israeli decision to transfer Abu Dis, Ayzariyah and Suwahirah to full Palestinian control.

The European Union appeals to the parties to refrain from unilateral acts that may prejudge the final negotiated agreements. In this context the European Union expresses particular concern about renewed Israeli settlement activity and road-building, which is contrary to international law and which further complicates the search for solutions. A solution in full conformity with agreement signed regarding Palestinian prisoners detained by Israel should be found.

Reiterating the importance of the Syrian and Lebanese tracks for a comprehensive solution in the region, the European Union urges the parties to stay engaged with a view to the early resumption of negotiations.

Pending a comprehensive solution, the European Union welcomes Israel's decision to withdraw from southern Lebanon in full accordance with United Nations Security Council resolutions 425 (1978) and 426 (1978) and expresses the hope that this move will facilitate reconciliation and rehabilitation in the region. The European Union expresses full support for the efforts of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to ensure implementation of the above-mentioned resolutions. The European Union urges all sides to fully cooperate with the United Nations to this end. In this context, the European Union emphasizes that the safety of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and other international personnel on the ground must be respected by all sides at all times.

V. THIRTEENTH MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE OF THE MOVEMENT OF NON-ALIGNED COUNTRIES ADOPTS DECISIONS ON THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE AT ITS MEETING IN CARTAGENA DE INDIAS, COLOMBIA, ON 8 AND 9 APRIL 2000

The Thirteenth Ministerial Conference of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries was held at Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, on 8 and 9 April 2000. Paragraphs 109, 110, 114 and 115 of the Final Document of the Conference (A/54/917-S/2000/580, annex), which pertain to the question of Palestine and the Middle East peace process, are reproduced below:

Palestine

109. We reaffirm the positions taken by the Twelfth Summit in Durban on the Question of Palestine and the Situation in the Middle East. We unequivocally support the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to return to their homeland and to have their own independent State with Jerusalem as its capital, and we reiterate our demand for the withdrawal of Israel, the occupying Power, from all of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, and the other Arab territories occupied since 1967. We call for the implementation of all United Nations resolutions on the question of Palestine, and reaffirm the permanent responsibility of the United Nations towards the question of Palestine until it is effectively solved in all its aspects.

110. We reaffirm the Movement's position on Occupied East Jerusalem, including on illegal Israeli actions aimed at changing the legal status and demographic composition of the city, the illegal Israeli settlements and the applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 to all the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem. We demand that Israel, the occupying Power, implement Security Council resolutions in this regard and abide by its legal obligations. We welcome the convening of the Conference of the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention on Measures to Enforce the Convention in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, on 15 July 1999, as recommended by the resolutions of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly. We further welcome the important statement by the Conference, which reaffirms the applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, and we reiterate support for the reconvening of the Conference should the need arise. We reiterate that Israeli representation in the work of the General Assembly must be in conformity with international law, thus ensuring that Israeli credentials do not cover the territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem. We urge that meetings of international organizations not be convened in occupied Jerusalem. We reaffirm our support for the Bethlehem 2000 Project in the Palestinian city of Bethlehem and express confidence that the increased assistance and engagement of the international community will ensure the successful commemoration of the event.

...

The Peace Process

114. We reaffirm the need to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East. We affirm our determination to actively strive towards the attainment of this objective. We reiterate our support for the Middle East Peace Process based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978) and the principle of land for peace. We further reiterate the need for compliance with and implementation of the agreements reached between the Palestine Liberation Organization and Israel as well as the fulfilment of the commitments and pledges made in accordance with the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference and the ensuing negotiations. We reiterate the need to fully respect and adhere to the September 2000 deadline set for the achievement of the final settlement. In this context we believe that the United Nations Millennium Summit should serve as an additional and natural deadline in which Palestine should participate as a United Nations Member State. We express our grave concern over the current state of affairs in the peace process, particularly the recent disruption of this process on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks. In this regard, we consider the attempts by the Israeli Government to change the terms of reference of the peace process and create a new reality on the ground, as well as its failure to give priority to the core questions, to be an obstacle in the way of realization of peace.

115. In view of the urgency and seriousness of the situation, we request the States Members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries to increase pressure and use all available measures at the regional and international levels to ensure Israel's compliance with the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference and the principle of

land for peace and Israel's full implementation of all agreements, undertakings, and commitments reached by the concerned parties on all tracks during the peace talks. We also affirm that the failure by the Israeli Government to respond positively would require the members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries to take further appropriate measures.

...

VI. EXCERPTS FROM THE DECLARATION ADOPTED BY THE SOUTH SUMMIT OF THE GROUP OF 77, HELD IN HAVANA FROM 10 TO 14 APRIL 2000

The South Summit of the Group of 77 was held in Havana from 10 to 14 April 2000. Paragraph 51 of the Declaration of the South Summit (A/55/74, annex), which pertains to the question of Palestine and the rights of the Palestinian people, is reproduced below:

Declaration of the South Summit

...

51. We affirm that bringing an end to the Israeli occupation and establishing a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East is a prerequisite for economic and social development in the region. We reaffirm our support for the Middle East peace process on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978) and the principle of land for peace. Peace demands complete Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and the achievement of a final settlement by the agreed-upon deadline of September 2000, as well as the establishment of the State of Palestine with Jerusalem as its capital. It also demands complete Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Syrian Golan and the demarcation of the 4 June 1967 line, as well as the unconditional withdrawal from South Lebanon and Western Bekaa to the internationally recognized boundaries. We affirm that measures taken by Israel aimed at changing the legal status and the demographic composition of Jerusalem are null and void.

...